

CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream during broadcast media programming, the method comprising:
~~receiving and storing at a media delivery device a plurality of targeted advertisements,~~
~~wherein the plurality of targeted advertisements are selected for transmission to the media delivery device by a transmitting entity based on user data associated with the media delivery device pre-identified by a transmitting entity to appeal to a preference of one or more viewers;~~
~~receiving and storing in a database at the media delivery device data representing a set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements received by the media delivery device;~~
~~receiving a signal at the media delivery device authorizing insertion of an to insert a stored advertisement into the media delivery stream during broadcast media programming, wherein the signal to insert the stored advertisement is sent with the broadcast media programming, and wherein the signal including includes selection data specifying an allowable type of the advertisement that is authorized to be inserted into the media delivery stream at least one required characteristic for the inserted stored advertisement;~~
~~identifying a set of allowable advertisements from among the plurality of targeted advertisements by searching the data representing the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements using the selection data, wherein the set of allowable advertisements includes advertisements that are of the allowable type and selecting advertisements that satisfy the at least one required characteristic provided in the signal;~~
~~when the search produces more than one stored advertisement satisfying the at least one required characteristic, selecting the stored a particular advertisement from the set of allowable advertisements to be inserted into the media delivery stream by~~

applying a weighting to at least one characteristic of each of the stored allowable advertisements of the set of allowable advertisements and comparing at least one weighted characteristic of each ~~stored advertisement~~ of the allowable advertisements, wherein the at least one weighted characteristic includes ~~the at least past usage of the stored~~ a particular targeted advertisement by the display media delivery device; and

inserting the particular selected advertisement ~~stored in the database~~ into the media delivery stream.

2. (Currently Amended) The method ~~of for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to~~ claim 1, wherein the targeted advertisements are television commercials.

3. (Currently Amended) The method ~~of for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to~~ claim 2, wherein the media delivery device is a set top box for receiving broadcast signals for a cable or satellite television network system.

4 - 7. (Cancelled).

8. (Currently Amended) The method ~~of for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to~~ claim 3, wherein the plurality of targeted advertisements are received by the media delivery device as encoded data files through ~~[[the]]~~ a telecommunications link to an external database of advertisements.

9. (Currently Amended) The method ~~of for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to~~ claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting signals between the media delivery device and ~~[[the]]~~ an external network, the signals including the user data associated with the media delivery device, wherein the user data indicates ~~indicating the one or more~~ types of advertisements that appeal to users of the media delivery device.

10 - 23. (Cancelled).

24. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium containing instructions for performing acts when executed on a computing device, the acts comprising:

receiving at a media delivery device a plurality of advertisements;

storing at the media delivery device a plurality of targeted advertisements of the plurality of advertisements, wherein the plurality of targeted advertisements are selected based on user data associated with the media delivery device ~~pre-identified by a transmitting entity to appeal to a preference of one or more viewers;~~

receiving and storing ~~in a database at the media delivery device~~ data representing a set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements ~~received by the media delivery device, each of the set of characteristics being unassociated with the one or more viewers;~~

receiving a signal at the media delivery device authorizing insertion of an ~~to insert a~~ stored advertisement into a media delivery stream during broadcast media programming, wherein the signal ~~to insert the stored advertisement~~ is sent with the broadcast media programming, and wherein the signal includes selection data specifying an allowable type of the advertisement that is authorized to be inserted into the media delivery stream ~~including at least one required characteristic for the inserted stored advertisement;~~

identifying a set of allowable advertisements from among the plurality of targeted advertisements by searching the data representing the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements using the selection data, wherein the set of allowable advertisements includes advertisements that are of the allowable type ~~and selecting advertisements that satisfy the at least one required characteristic provided in the signal;~~

~~when the search produces more than one stored advertisement satisfying the at least one required characteristic, selecting the stored~~ a particular advertisement from the set of allowable advertisements to be inserted into the media delivery stream by applying a weighting to at least one characteristic of each of the stored allowable advertisements of the set of allowable advertisements and comparing ~~at least one weighted characteristic~~ characteristics of each stored advertisement ~~of the allowable advertisements, wherein the one or more weighted characteristics~~

include at least past usage of a particular targeted advertisement by the media delivery device~~are unassociated with the one or more viewers;~~ and inserting the particular selected advertisement into the media delivery stream.

25 - 30. (Cancelled).

31. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 24, wherein the ~~at least one characteristic of each stored advertisement of the more than one stored advertisement satisfying the at least one required characteristic~~ includes weighted characteristics of each of the allowable advertisements that are compared further include one or more of: a sponsor name~~contract condition associated with each of the allowable advertisements;~~ a type of product advertised; and a relative pricing of the product advertised.

32. (Currently Amended) The method ~~for inserting targeted advertisements into a media delivery stream according to~~ of claim 1, wherein the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of advertisements comprises a content type field and wherein identifying the set of allowable advertisements~~the selecting of advertisements that satisfy the at least one required characteristic~~ comprises applying a bit mask to the content type field of each of the plurality of targeted advertisements to identify allowable advertisements from a hierarchy of categories, wherein ~~the most~~ general category types are masked with high order bits and ~~the most~~ more specific category types are masked with low order bits.

33. (Currently Amended) The computer readable medium of claim 24, wherein the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of advertisements comprises a content type field and ~~the selecting of advertisements that satisfy the at least one required characteristic~~ wherein identifying the set of allowable advertisements comprises applying a bit mask to the content type field of each of the targeted advertisements to identify allowable advertisements from a hierarchy of categories, wherein ~~the most~~ general category types are masked with high order bits and ~~the most~~ more specific category types are masked with low order bits.

34. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the set of characteristics includes information categorizing each of the plurality of targeted advertisements within a hierarchy of categories.

35. (New) The method of claim 34, wherein the selection data further includes categorization data designating a location in the hierarchy of categories, wherein the particular selected advertisement includes a closest advertisement in the hierarchy of categories to the designated location.

36. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
gathering the user data at the media delivery device; and
sending the user data and a unique identifier of the media delivery device to a
transmitting entity.

37. (New) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
gathering the user data at the media delivery device;
determining, based on the user data, whether a particular targeted advertisement of the
plurality of targeted advertisements is ineffective; and
deleting the particular advertisement from the media delivery device when the particular
advertisement is determined to be ineffective.

38. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the weighted characteristics further include a frequency at which a particular targeted advertisement of the plurality of targeted advertisements has been inserted into the media stream.

39. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the weighted characteristics further include an amount to be paid by an advertiser.

40. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the weighted characteristics further include an expiration date of a contract with an advertiser.

41. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the weighted characteristics further include a correlation between a product associated with an advertisement and subject matter of a television program of the media delivery stream.

42. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the selection data further specifies one or more restricted types of advertisements, and wherein the method further includes excluding advertisements of the restricted types from the set of allowable advertisements before selecting the particular advertisement to be inserted into the media delivery stream.

43. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the selection data further specifies one or more prohibited sponsors of advertisements, and wherein the method further includes excluding advertisements associated with the one or more prohibited sponsors from the set of allowable advertisements before selecting the particular advertisement to be inserted into the media delivery stream.

44. (New) A media delivery device comprising:

a network interface to receive a plurality of advertisements;

a memory to store a plurality of targeted advertisements that are selected as targeted advertisements based on user data associated with the media delivery device and to store data representing a set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements; and

a processor coupled to the network interface and to the memory, the processor adapted to: detect a signal authorizing insertion of an advertisement into a media delivery stream during broadcast media programming, wherein the signal is sent with the broadcast media programming, and wherein the signal includes selection data specifying an allowable type of the advertisement that is authorized to be inserted into the media delivery stream;

identify a set of allowable advertisements from among the plurality of targeted advertisements by searching the data representing the set of characteristics associated with each of the plurality of targeted advertisements using the selection data, wherein the set of allowable advertisements include advertisements that are of the allowable type;

select a particular advertisement from the set of allowable advertisements to be inserted into the media delivery stream by applying a weighting to at least one characteristic of each of the allowable advertisements of the set of allowable advertisements and comparing weighted characteristics of each of the allowable advertisements, wherein the weighted characteristics include at least past usage of a particular targeted advertisement by the media delivery device; and

insert the particular selected advertisement into the media delivery stream.

45. (New) The media delivery device of claim 44, wherein the plurality of advertisements received by the network interface include the targeted advertisements selected based on the user data associated with the media delivery device and one or more additional advertisements that are not targeted advertisements, and wherein the processor is further adapted to:

determine whether a particular advertisement received is a targeted advertisement based on the user data;

search the memory to determine whether the particular advertisement is already saved in the memory when the particular advertisement is a targeted advertisement; and

save the particular advertisement at the memory when the particular advertisement is not already saved in the memory, and not save the particular advertisement when the particular advertisement is already saved in the memory.